

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 39

To establish a coordinated national ocean exploration program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 4, 2007

Mr. STEVENS introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To establish a coordinated national ocean exploration program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Ocean and Coastal Exploration and NOAA Act (OCEAN
6 Act)”.

7 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
8 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—NATIONAL OCEAN EXPLORATION PROGRAM

Sec. 101. Short title.
 Sec. 102. Establishment.
 Sec. 103. Authorities.
 Sec. 104. Exploration technology and infrastructure task force.
 Sec. 105. Interagency financing.
 Sec. 106. Authorization of appropriations.

TITLE II—UNDERSEA RESEARCH PROGRAM

Sec. 201. Short title.
 Sec. 202. Establishment.
 Sec. 203. Purpose.
 Sec. 204. Program.
 Sec. 205. Regional centers and technology institute.
 Sec. 206. Competitiveness.
 Sec. 207. Authorization of appropriations.

1 **TITLE I—NATIONAL OCEAN** 2 **EXPLORATION PROGRAM**

3 **SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This title may be cited as the “National Ocean Explo-
 5 ration Program Act”.

6 **SEC. 102. ESTABLISHMENT.**

7 The Secretary of Commerce, through the Adminis-
 8 trator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-
 9 tration, shall, in consultation with the National Science
 10 Foundation and other appropriate Federal agencies, es-
 11 tablish a coordinated national ocean exploration program
 12 within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-
 13 tion that promotes collaboration with existing programs
 14 of the agency, including those authorized in title II.

15 **SEC. 103. AUTHORITIES.**

16 In carrying out the program the Administrator of the
 17 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall—

1 (1) conduct interdisciplinary exploration voy-
2 ages or other scientific activities in conjunction with
3 other Federal agencies or academic or educational
4 institutions, to survey little known areas of the ma-
5 rine environment, inventory, observe, and assess liv-
6 ing and nonliving marine resources, and report such
7 findings;

8 (2) give priority attention to deep ocean re-
9 gions, with a focus on surveying deep water marine
10 systems that hold potential for important scientific
11 discoveries, such as hydrothermal vent communities
12 and seamounts;

13 (3) conduct scientific voyages to locate, define,
14 and document historic shipwrecks, submerged sites,
15 and other ocean exploration activities that combine
16 archaeology and oceanographic sciences;

17 (4) develop, in consultation with the National
18 Science Foundation, a transparent process for re-
19 viewing and approving proposals for activities to be
20 conducted under this program;

21 (5) enhance the technical capability of the
22 United States marine science community by pro-
23 moting the development of improved oceanographic
24 research, communication, navigation, and data col-

1 lection systems, as well as underwater platforms and
2 sensors;

3 (6) accept donations of property, data, and
4 equipment to be applied for the purpose of exploring
5 the oceans or increasing knowledge of the oceans;

6 (7) establish an ocean exploration forum to en-
7 courage partnerships and promote communication
8 among experts and other stakeholders in order to
9 enhance the scientific and technical expertise and
10 relevance of the national program; and

11 (8) avoid directing the programs towards activi-
12 ties relating to global temperature trends and in-
13 stead focus on underwater regions of particular sci-
14 entific interest.

15 **SEC. 104. EXPLORATION TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUC-**
16 **TURE TASK FORCE.**

17 The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-
18 tion, in coordination with the National Aeronautics and
19 Space Administration, the U.S. Geological Survey, Office
20 of Naval Research, and relevant governmental, non-gov-
21 ernmental, academic, and other experts, shall convene an
22 ocean technology and infrastructure task force to develop
23 and implement a strategy—

24 (1) to facilitate transfer of new exploration
25 technology to the program;

1 (2) to improve availability of communications
2 infrastructure, including satellite capabilities, to the
3 program;

4 (3) to develop an integrated, workable and com-
5 prehensive data management information processing
6 system that will make information on unique and
7 significant features obtained by the program avail-
8 able for research and management purposes;

9 (4) to conduct public outreach activities that
10 improve the public understanding of ocean science,
11 resources, and processes, in conjunction with rel-
12 evant programs of the National Oceanic and Atmos-
13 pheric Administration, the National Science Founda-
14 tion, and other agencies; and

15 (5) to encourage cost-sharing partnerships with
16 governmental and non-governmental entities that
17 will assist in transferring exploration technology and
18 technical expertise to the program.

19 **SEC. 105. INTERAGENCY FINANCING.**

20 The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-
21 tion, the National Science Foundation, and other Federal
22 agencies involved in the program, are authorized to par-
23 ticipate in interagency financing and share, transfer, re-
24 ceive and spend funds appropriated to any Federal partici-
25 pant in the program for the purposes of carrying out any

1 administrative or programmatic project or activity under
 2 this section. Funds may be transferred among such de-
 3 partments and agencies through an appropriate instru-
 4 ment that specifies the goods, services, or space being ac-
 5 quired from another Federal participant and the costs of
 6 the same.

7 **SEC. 106. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

8 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Na-
 9 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry
 10 out the program—

- 11 (1) \$30,500,000 for fiscal year 2008;
- 12 (2) \$33,550,000 for fiscal year 2009;
- 13 (3) \$36,905,000 for fiscal year 2010;
- 14 (4) \$40,596,000 for fiscal year 2011;
- 15 (5) \$44,655,000 for fiscal year 2012;
- 16 (6) \$49,121,000 for fiscal year 2013;
- 17 (7) \$54,033,000 for fiscal year 2014;
- 18 (8) \$59,436,000 for fiscal year 2015;
- 19 (9) \$65,379,000 for fiscal year 2016; and
- 20 (10) \$71,917,000 for fiscal year 2017.

21 **TITLE II—UNDERSEA RESEARCH**
 22 **PROGRAM**

23 **SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.**

24 This title may be cited as the “NOAA Undersea Re-
 25 search Program Act of 2007”.

1 **SEC. 202. ESTABLISHMENT.**

2 The Administrator of the National Oceanic and At-
3 mospheric Administration shall establish and maintain an
4 undersea research program and shall designate a Director
5 of that program.

6 **SEC. 203. PURPOSE.**

7 The purpose of the program is to increase scientific
8 knowledge essential for the informed management, use
9 and preservation of oceanic, coastal and large lake re-
10 sources through undersea research, exploration, education
11 and technology development. The program shall be part
12 of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's
13 undersea research, education, and technology development
14 efforts, and also make available the infrastructure and ex-
15 pertise to service the undersea science needs of the aca-
16 demic community.

17 **SEC. 204. PROGRAM.**

18 The program shall be conducted through a national
19 headquarters, a network of regional undersea research
20 centers, and a national technology institute. Overall direc-
21 tion of the program will be provided by the program direc-
22 tor with advice from the Council of Center directors com-
23 prised of the directors of the regional centers and the na-
24 tional technology institute.

1 **SEC. 205. REGIONAL CENTERS AND TECHNOLOGY INSTI-**
2 **TUTE.**

3 The following research, exploration, education, and
4 technology programs shall be conducted through the net-
5 work of regional centers and the national technology insti-
6 tute:

7 (1) Core research and exploration based on na-
8 tional and regional undersea research priorities.

9 (2) Advanced undersea technology to support
10 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-
11 tion's research mission and programs.

12 (3) Undersea science-based education and out-
13 reach programs to enrich ocean science education
14 and public awareness of the oceans and Great
15 Lakes.

16 (4) Development of advanced undersea tech-
17 nology associated with seafloor observatories, re-
18 motely operated vehicles, autonomous underwater ve-
19 hicles, and new sampling and sensing technologies.

20 (5) Discovery, study, and development of nat-
21 ural products from ocean and aquatic systems.

22 **SEC. 206. COMPETITIVENESS.**

23 Except for a small discretionary fund for rapid re-
24 sponse activities and for the National Oceanic and Atmos-
25 pheric Administration-related service projects, for which
26 no more than 10 percent of the program budget shall be

1 set aside, the external projects supported by the regional
 2 centers shall be managed using an open and competitive
 3 process to evaluate scientific merit, relevance to the Na-
 4 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, regional
 5 and national research goals, and technical feasibility.

6 **SEC. 207. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

7 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Na-
 8 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—

9 (1) for fiscal year 2008—

10 (A) \$12,500,000 for the regional centers,
 11 of which 50 percent shall be for West Coast Re-
 12 gional Centers and 50 percent shall be for East
 13 Coast Regional Centers; and

14 (B) \$5,000,000 for the National Tech-
 15 nology Institute;

16 (2) for fiscal year 2009—

17 (A) \$13,750,000 for the regional centers,
 18 of which 50 percent shall be for West Coast Re-
 19 gional Centers and 50 percent shall be for East
 20 Coast Regional Centers; and

21 (B) \$5,500,000 for the National Tech-
 22 nology Institute;

23 (3) for fiscal year 2010—

24 (A) \$15,125,000 for the regional centers,
 25 of which 50 percent shall be for West Coast Re-

1 gional Centers and 50 percent shall be for East
2 Coast Regional Centers; and

3 (B) \$6,050,000 for the National Tech-
4 nology Institute;

5 (4) for fiscal year 2011—

6 (A) \$16,638,000 for the regional centers,
7 of which 50 percent shall be for West Coast Re-
8 gional Centers and 50 percent shall be for East
9 Coast Regional Centers; and

10 (B) \$6,655,000 for the National Tech-
11 nology Institute;

12 (5) for fiscal year 2012—

13 (A) \$18,301,000 for the regional centers,
14 of which 50 percent shall be for West Coast Re-
15 gional Centers and 50 percent shall be for East
16 Coast Regional Centers; and

17 (B) \$7,321,000 for the National Tech-
18 nology Institute;

19 (6) for fiscal year 2013—

20 (A) \$20,131,000 for the regional centers,
21 of which 50 percent shall be for West Coast Re-
22 gional Centers and 50 percent shall be for East
23 Coast Regional Centers; and

24 (B) \$8,053,000 for the National Tech-
25 nology Institute;

1 (7) for fiscal year 2014—

2 (A) \$22,145,000 for the regional centers,
3 of which 50 percent shall be for West Coast Re-
4 gional Centers and 50 percent shall be for East
5 Coast Regional Centers; and

6 (B) \$8,859,000 for the National Tech-
7 nology Institute;

8 (8) for fiscal year 2015—

9 (A) \$24,359,000 for the regional centers,
10 of which 50 percent shall be for West Coast Re-
11 gional Centers and 50 percent shall be for East
12 Coast Regional Centers; and

13 (B) \$9,744,000 for the National Tech-
14 nology Institute;

15 (9) for fiscal year 2016—

16 (A) \$26,795,000 for the regional centers,
17 of which 50 percent shall be for West Coast Re-
18 gional Centers and 50 percent shall be for East
19 Coast Regional Centers; and

20 (B) \$10,718,000 for the National Tech-
21 nology Institute; and

22 (10) for fiscal year 2017—

23 (A) \$29,474,000 for the regional centers,
24 of which 50 percent shall be for West Coast Re-

1 gional Centers and 50 percent shall be for East
2 Coast Regional Centers; and
3 (B) \$11,790,000 for the National Tech-
4 nology Institute.

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